

Scripture I John 4: 7-21

Hymn 393.

Meditation

Closing Prayer

FALL MEETING LAKE
ERIE ASSOCIATION

With Love From the Church

When I was serving in the armed forces in Korea, the company to which I was attached was company G. In the phonetic alphabet of the armed forces the letter G was simply George. The company commander was Joseph Love. I didn't know it but every letter that went out of our company was stamped, "With love from George." Now you can readily see the implication. This could be taken two ways. One way meaning with Captain Love of George company, or with love, warmest affection and regards from company G. This is what the impact of the church should be upon those with whom it comes into contact. Persons outside of the church are asking and have been asking for sometime, "Where is the Church, What is the church doing in such a given situation?" These are things people want to know. In some cases it is strictly a matter of trying to embarrass the church and in others it is a sincere inquiry. But in either case we can answer very confidently that the Church is serving and has been trying to serve in all parts of the globe. But perhaps there is one element we often overlook. It is the element of love. We can give of our time, we can give of our material resources. But if we neglect to do the giving with love all is lost.

Our service, our giving, everything should be permeated with love. The thing that people need today more than ever before is love. This is more true now than it ever has been. I need not remind you or recall to your thinking what is and has been taking place throughout the nation and the world. We have heard and seen many displays of hatred and violence. What is needed now is a wave of love from all Christians to stem the flow of this hatred and violence. One of the popular songs of a short while ago said, "What the world needs now is love sweet love, it's the only thing there's just too little of." How true. Think of how love can change things. If we continually meet violence with violence we lose all hope of having peace and tranquillity. The message that Jesus spoke and taught was one of love. To those who preach otherwise I say they are not reading the same book that I am. He taught, love your enemies, pray for those who hurt you, go the extra mile, turn the other cheek and so on. These are all examples of love. This is what we should and must do as Christians or as followers of Jesus if you will.

William Barclay tells an example of this love. He speaks of a British battalion whose men came to church services because they had to. They sang

the hymns with gusto if they liked them and knew them. They listened very attentively to the preacher, if he was interesting. And beyond this they never came near the church the rest of the week. But when an earthquake befell the city of Quetta India, their rescue work so impressed a Brahmin that he demanded to be baptized immediately. They showed love and concern for these people. It wasn't just a cold handout of money. Nor was it an indifferent doling out of food and clothing. They spoke the language that all human beings respond to. They spoke love. This is what is needed today. Let it begin with us.

When we observe how some parts of the church movement have become sidetracked we wonder just what it is they advocate. For instance in a summer issue of Christianity Today, a report on the latest sessions of the National Council of Churches was made. It pointed out that a policy statement was passed by an 81-61 vote. The statement said, "We recognize that when justice cannot be secured either through action within existing structures or through civil disobedience, an increasing number of Christians may feel called to seek justice through resistance or revolution." Remember that these are very learned men who are supposed to represent Christianity. And here they are advocating violence. This is not just my opinion of them either. In the same issue of Christianity Today is a summary of the news. It is entitled "Back to Violence as Usual". The very first sentence states, "1968 may go down as the year in which the world tried to cope with a rising tide of violence while ecumenical assemblies sought to encourage it." Again I say that this is not the Gospel Jesus Christ spoke. He never advocated violence of any kind. True He showed violence in the Synagogue, but He never destroyed peoples homes or businesses as we see today. This is the end result of following advice such as ^{THAT} ~~is~~ proposed by the National Council of Churches. This is definitely not love. That is why I have made the statement that we need love in all elements of the church today. ^{STORY OF EP. MINISTER} An example of the harm that can be caused by a lack of love and concern is the story told of the great Hindu Mahatma Ghandi. He was very interested in Christianity and expressed a desire to become a part of it. However because of the way he was treated several times by the British officers in charge he rejected Christianity. He made the remark that if Christians acted like the man whom they followed, in other words Jesus Christ,

then, he said he would become a Christian. As a result of his action thousands became lost to Christianity forever, because literally thousands followed him and did what he did. So you see we must try to show love in all ways and in all things. People judge us and thereby pass judgement on the church by what we do. We can do more with a smile and a sincere warm handclasp sometimes than we can do with a five dollar bill. We can reach more people with a desire to share their problems. A minister I have been assigned to, to be my councilor, my shepherd sort of. Told me that when you serve a congregation you share their joys and their sorrows. Their tears become your tears and their joys your joys. I have found this to be very true. But I have also found that this is not only the mission of preachers but becomes the mission of all of us. If each Christian would try to help one other person and look after him or her, think of what love would mean to other people. The church would take on new meaning and people could see it as it should be. But each proposal must have a beginning. So why not start this program in our own Lake Erie Association. Let us each one strive to shower those we meet with love. Perhaps the contagiousness of it will be caught up by others and spread far and wide. At least we know it would have the blessing of God since His Son advocated this kind of program. It is worth a try certainly. God grant that we may love His people as we should. "What the world needs now is love, sweet love, it's the only thing there's just too little of." Let us pray.